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### Review of Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. G.A.J. Rogers and Karl Schuhmann

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Thomas Hobbes. *Leviathan*.

2 vols. Eds. G. A. J. Rogers and Karl Schuhmann. Bristol: Thoemmes Continuum, 2003. 272; 568 pp. illus. \$225. ISBN: 1-84371-026-9.

Today it needs no justification to review works by or about Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) in a journal devoted entirely to the Renaissance. Hobbes stands with one foot in the rhetorical-classical culture of Renaissance England, just as surely as he stands with the other in the world of seventeenth-century mechanist philosophy

and science. His *Leviathan*, published in 1651, has become a classic in the history of political thought. It has been reprinted many times, but its printing history has never been carefully analyzed with a view to establishing a critical edition. This is what volume 1 of the new Thoemmes edition sets out to do, while volume 2 presents the resulting edition of the text.

*Leviathan* was first published in 1651, with Andrew Crooke as its printer. Two other editions have the same date and printer on their title page, but have generally been considered to be of later date and of inferior quality. The three are usually referred to as Head (H), Bear (B), and Ornaments (O) editions, after the decorations on their title pages. Next to these printings, we have a manuscript copy presented by Hobbes to the future King Charles II in 1651. Much later, Hobbes himself prepared a Latin translation, published in 1668. There are important later editions from 1750 and 1839, and there is a host of modern editions, usually mere reprints of copies of H. Karl Schuhmann — for it was his project (as Rogers also makes clear in the preface) — who examined in the most minute detail all editions, including what he calls the “pseudo-editions” from the (late) twentieth century. Every aspect of each of these editions or reprints has been noticed, counted, examined, and analyzed, down to the level of interpunctuation, italics, capitals, headers, marginal notes, and number of lines. Individual quires are examined, errata lists checked. In studying this mass of data one is reminded of Hobbes’s own words that “to demonstration and teaching of the truth, there are required long deductions, and great attention, which is unpleasant to the hearer,” but this “dry discourse” (to use another Hobbesian phrase) presents such a wealth of information on the individual editions and printings and their interrelationships that it often makes for engrossing reading, even though one is surprised to see that the examination of H is limited to two copies. In good Hobbesian vein, the destructive part is no less clearly present than the constructive part, and editors of self-styled “critical” editions are found faulty in many, and often revealing, respects.

On the constructive side we are offered authoritative chapters on the genesis of *Leviathan* and its Hobbesian sources as well as a highly detailed account of the history of the text. Schuhmann argues that B and O editions are not inferior to H, and that both contain corrections and emendations by Hobbes himself (those in B, concerning the propagation of the wicked, are well known), although most of the changes, Schuhmann believes, are due to correctors and typesetters. His conclusion is that “O derives directly from B; the B copy at the basis of O must have been carefully, though not exhaustively, revised; this revision drew in some way not only on H, but to a limited degree also on (a neat manuscript copy of) Hobbes’s autograph, as well as on a few corrections he may have developed only when translating the work into Latin” (174). While there is much that is extremely valuable in this introductory volume, it contains a big mistake that skews the whole picture. For as Norman Malcolm has convincingly argued in his recent *Aspects of Hobbes* (2002, and reviewed in *RQ* 57.2 [2004], 622–23), the printing of B must be connected with a surreptitious printing in 1670, after which the printing (of B) was completed in Holland in 1675–78. The O edition, which is clearly later than

B, is dated by Malcolm to the beginning of the eighteenth century, and is considered by him to be of minimal value. Schuhmann, however, links O, rather than B, with the events in 1670. According to him, B must date from 1651, just a couple of months after the publication of H. This is simply incorrect. The B edition contains doctrinal changes on Hobbes's part, concerning the propagation of the wicked, and these cannot be documented before 1668, when the Latin translation was published. Moreover, the layout of B clearly shows that it was printed in two batches. In addition, the bear ornament is only found in the work of the printers connected with this surreptitious printing, and cannot be traced before the 1670s. And there are more pieces of evidence that make Schuhmann's hypothesis untenable.

When faced with these findings by Malcolm, Schuhmann had no time, after so much preparatory work, to change his own reconstruction. He had become fatally ill in 2002 and died in March 2003. This should explain (and pardon) the ad hoc character of his suggestion that the precise date of B's publication is only of minor interest for his purposes. He argues that "it is not so much the production and publication history of B that is being investigated here as the relevance of B for establishing a critical edition of the text of *Leviathan*. In this regard, only the direct link established above between Hobbes and B is of importance." (148; cf. 181) But, of course, a much later date for B implies a posthumous publication for O, which in turn casts doubt on such a "direct link" between Hobbes and O. Indeed, the changes made in O are not especially spectacular, and while it is not impossible that they go back to changes Hobbes once made in a copy of B, the conclusion that O represents Hobbes's "*Ausgabe letzter Hand*" (175), and that as such it is "undoubtedly superior to both H and B" (175), is unconvincing.

Given this conclusion, one would expect Schuhmann to have based the edition on O, but surprisingly he chose H as base text for "practical reasons" having to do with its more regular spelling and the fact that it was the first edition. This edition by Schuhmann and Rogers notes changes, corrections and variants readings (when potentially interesting) from the manuscript, from B and from O, and incorporates useful emendations from later editions. The Latin translation is used as support for several readings and emendations. As such it presents much valuable information about the history of the text, weeding out many mistakes in previous editions. But since no attempt is being made to collate copies of H it is difficult to assess the quality of the critical apparatus: which variants already occurred in an H copy and which are emendations and corrections made by later editors? The edition then is the result of solid scholarship mixed with an idiosyncratic *ratio edendi* and a misdating of the most important editions. It cannot therefore be called the definitive text of *Leviathan*; yet future editors will profit from the immensely useful survey in the introductory part.

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